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SUBJECT: MUHAJARRIYA UPDATE - FEBRUARY 4

REF: A) KHARTOUM 140  
B) KHARTOUM 134

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: UNAMID reported that the GOS had "moved in and taken control" of Muhajarriya as of 15:40 on February 4. Sudan National Radio made a similar announcement late the same day. Although the GOS appears to have reduced the number of aerial bombings compared to February 3, Sudanese Armed Forces reportedly dropped at least 18 bombs early in the morning of February 4. UNAMID reported that the GOS again blocked an assessment mission to the area on February 4 citing security risks, an apparent SOFA violation though UNAMID has not yet called the GOS out on this publicly (in addition to complaining to MFA about the SOFA violation yesterday, Embassy passed on the same complaint to Sudanese Intelligence and NCP officials). OFDA-funded partner Solidarites reported that the GOS has ordered the organization to stop food distribution near Muhajarriya; it appears that at least 5000 IDPs near UNAMID's Team Site (TS) are living off of previously distributed WFP rations. USAID partners also reported that the GOS has instituted new stringent rules over fuel distribution in South Darfur. Although the directive was likely intended to cut off JEM's supplies, this has already affected the delivery of humanitarian services throughout the region. END SUMMARY.

2. UNAMID's JMAC (Joint Mission Analysis Center) told poloff that that the GOS had "moved in and taken control" of Muhajarriya as of 15:40 on February 4 (Sudan National Radio made a similar announcement late the same day). A bitter Minni Minnawi confirmed to CDA Fernandez that GOS now controlled Muhajarriya, a town he had held for the past four years until JEM briefly took it 20 days ago. The JMAC officer stated that the Justice and Equality Movement had left Muhajarriya and that UNAMID was not aware of their current location. (Note: One separate UNAMID report indicated that UNAMID has received other reporting stating that JEM is currently at least 50 km outside Muhajarriya. End Note.) UNAMID Sector South Commander Brigadier General F.E. Eze told poloff earlier in the day that although the level of bombing had dropped off throughout the day of February 4, SAF planes dropped 18 bombs starting at 2:00 am February 4 in the rural area stretching between Muhajarriya and Labado (but not in either town). The scope of the damage inflicted or number of casualties is not yet known, he said.

3. (SBU) UNAMID reports and conversations with UNDSS based in Nyala and El-Fasher also revealed that there was less aerial bombing on February 4 than February 3. One UNDSS contact in Nyala stated that Muhajarriya "has calmed down." Since then no airstrikes or overflights have occurred over Muhajarriya, he said. He further stated that in the course of yesterday's bombings, no bombs were dropped on Muhajarriya town. They were dropped much further away, he said, though apparently a house was bombed inadvertently in a deserted area. This source noted that it is impossible to determine the number of casualties at this point.

POSSIBLE SOFA VIOLATION AND LIMITED AIRPORTS ACCESS

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14. (SBU) Although the Nyala airport is open, UNAMID and INGO sources all stated that access has been reduced and that the GOS had blocked another UNAMID flights. One senior UNAMID official described the GOS interference as "part of the Government's ongoing violation of the Status of Forces Agreement." Other sources stated that the Government has allowed large planes to land and take off while helicopters and small plans continue to be canceled. Although the reason for this restriction is not clear, some observers believe that the GOS wants to restrict smaller planes that fly at a lower elevation and are therefore able to observe GOS and rebel movement positions.

#### SOLIDARITES ORDERED TO STOP WORK IN MUHAJARRIYA

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15. (SBU) USAID officers learned on February 4 that OFDA funded partner Solidarites was informed to stop food distribution in Muhajarriya. According to these sources, the GOS's Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) told this organization that once the bombing stops they can resume food distribution. These sources stated that this may be impossible, as HAC also requested that Solidarites remove all their assets from Muhajarriya and return them to Nyala. USAID partners reported that there are now at least 5,000 IDPs surrounding the UNAMID team site in Muhajarriya, who are for now are surviving on rations distributed earlier (see below). UNHCR also reported that IDPs are arriving in North Darfur "by the truckload" from South Darfur. SLM officials noted that some are headed to Zamzam IDP camp outside of El Fasher, a Zaghawa stronghold controlled by SLM/MM.

16. (SBU) WFP contacts also told USAIDoff on February 4 that regular food distributions are not taking place in Muhajarriya.

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This is unfortunate, noted this source, since Solidarites' local staff are still on the ground in Muhajariya, WFP has ample food in the area, and under normal conditions Solidarites' would be able to distribute the normal 15-day ration very quickly. This source stated that IDPs are afraid to visit the distribution center, and that WFP was still formulating a plan for providing these individuals with food and other assistance. (Note: OFDA-funded partner Solidarites was able to undertake limited food distributions prior to the bombings. It is assumed that these food distributions made prior to the bombings are what IDPs are currently surviving on. End Note.) Also, unconfirmed reports indicate that MSF/Holland local staff remain in Muhajariya providing limited health services. Solidarites reported to OFDA that there are three boreholes located near the team site that is providing limited access to water for the IDP's. Latest reports from Solidarites indicate that the number of IDPs at the UNAMID team site has risen to 2000 households or approximately 10,000 people.

#### NEW FUEL RESTRICTIONS

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17. (SBU) USAID partners also reported that the GOS has instituted new stringent rules over fuel distribution in South Darfur. INGO and UN source told USAID officers that the Sudanese authorities have instituted a new policy which only allows vehicles' tanks, and not jerry cans or other vessels, to be filled. Additionally, the United Nations Joint Logistics Center in South Darfur (UNJLC) noted that one of their own fuel convoys in El Fasher has been waiting for GOS approval for the trip to South Darfur, and that as a result the UNJLC is running low on food. Observers from several INGOs believe that the Government may be attempting to reduce the possibility of JEM refueling its vehicles as it flees. This shortage has already started to impact gas-powered water pumps. This has reduced water accessibility in at least three different INGO locations in South Darfur.

#### UNAMID-GOS RELATIONS

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18. (SBU) Most Sudanese daily newspapers also prominently featured statements from the Sudanese Armed Forces on February 4. "Al-Rai Al-Aam," ran the headline, "SAF calls upon UNAMID to pull out from Muhajarriya within 24 Hours while, UNAMID affirms that a withdrawal is impossible." UNDSS stated that UNAMID, even after Secretary

General Ban Ki-Moon's decision to remain in Muhajarriya, continue to discuss an evacuation from Muhajarriya. UNAMID's Senior leadership, including Joint Special Representative Adada, Deputy Force Commander Karenzi, and Political Chief Abdul Muhammad all traveled to Ndjamena on February 4 to meet with Khalil Ibrahim.

COMMENT

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19. (SBU) As JEM has left Muhajarriya, it is logical that the Government would reduce its aerial bombing and that it would move into the area. The restrictions on both UNAMID and INGOs should be immediately lifted as the violence subsides in Muhajarriya. To date the UN and NGO have not been granted access to the most troubled areas of South Darfur to assess the humanitarian conditions for the IDPs in Muhajariya and at the UNAMID team site. The international community must continue pushing the government for a humanitarian access and a demilitarized corridor to gain access to the affected population. Post will continue to press the regime on these points but additional statements from the Department and senior US officials would help achieve this goal. JEM's misadventure has now resulted in two new Darfur towns - Muhajarriya and Gereida - falling into the Sudanese Government's ruthless hands for the first time in years.

FERNANDEZ